

# State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®)

## Progress Measure Questions and Answers

### Defining the STAAR Progress Measure

#### 1. What is the STAAR progress measure?

The STAAR progress measure provides information about the amount of improvement or growth that a student has made in a subject area. For reading and math, this measure is based on a comparison of a student's test score last year with his or her score this year. For writing, this measure is based on a comparison of a student's test score in 4<sup>th</sup> grade with his or her test score in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. For STAAR, progress is measured as a student's gain score, the difference between the score a student achieved in the prior year and the score a student achieved in the current year. Individual student progress is then categorized as *Did Not Meet*, *Met*, or *Exceeded*.

#### 2. For what grades and content areas is progress measured for STAAR?

In 2015, progress measures are available for STAAR (including STAAR L and STAAR A) for reading in grades 4–8, grade 7 writing, English II, and Algebra I. There is no STAAR progress measure for grades 4–8 mathematics in 2015. The table below details current plans regarding when progress information will be reported (R) and used for accountability (A) in 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017.

		2014				2015			2016			2017		
		General	Spanish	Modified	Alternate	General	Spanish	Alternate	General	Spanish	Alternate	General	Spanish	Alternate
STAAR Mathematics	Grade 3 → 4	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A				R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A
	Grade 4 → 5	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A				R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A
	Grade 5 → 6	R/A		R/A	R/A				R/A		R/A	R/A		R/A
	Grade 6 → 7	R/A		R/A	R/A				R/A		R/A	R/A		R/A
	Grade 7 → 8	R/A		R/A	R/A				R/A		R/A	R/A		R/A
	Grade 7 → Algebra I	R				R/A			R/A			R/A		
	Grade 8 → Algebra I	R		R/A	R/A	R/A			R/A		R/A	R/A		
	Accelerated Testing	R/A	R/A						R/A	R/A		R/A	R/A	
STAAR Reading	Grade 3 → 4	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A		R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A
	Grade 4 → 5	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A		R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A	R/A
	Grade 5 → 6	R/A		R/A	R/A	R/A			R/A		R/A	R/A		R/A
	Grade 6 → 7	R/A		R/A	R/A	R/A			R/A		R/A	R/A		R/A
	Grade 7 → 8	R/A		R/A	R/A	R/A			R/A		R/A	R/A		R/A
	Grade 8 → English I				R/A						R/A			R/A
	English I → English II	2015			R/A	R/A			R/A		R/A	R/A		R/A
	Accelerated Testing	R/A	R/A			R/A	R/A		R/A	R/A		R/A	R/A	
STAAR Writing	Grade 4 → 7	2015				R/A			R/A			R/A		
	English I → English II	2015				R/A			R/A		R/A	R/A		R/A

In the above table, “Accelerated Testing” refers to students who do not test in consecutive grades/courses from year to year in a single content area. Also, please note that STAAR Modified was last administered in 2013–2014.

In 2015, the grades 3–8 STAAR mathematics assessments for the revised TEKS and the redesigned STAAR Alternate assessments (STAAR Alternate 2) were administered for the first time. In 2016, after two years of data are available, progress can once again be calculated for grades 3–8 STAAR mathematics assessments and STAAR Alternate 2.

### **3. How are the STAAR progress-measure classifications (*Did Not Meet*, *Met*, and *Exceeded*) determined?**

The STAAR progress-measure classifications are determined by comparing a student’s gain score—the difference between the student’s current year score and prior year score—to a progress target.

The STAAR progress measures and progress targets are grounded in the STAAR performance standards and the goals of having all students achieve at or above Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance and having high performing students maintain their achievement above Level III: Advanced Academic Performance.

The *Met* progress target is defined as the distance between the final recommended performance standards from the prior year grade and the current year grade in the same content area. This definition is based on the goal that students in Level II and Level III will maintain their respective levels of performance. For example, if a student is currently in Level II for grade 4 reading, the expectation is that the student will at least maintain Level II performance in grade 5 reading. This means that the student scored at least a 1550 in grade 4 reading (based on the final recommended Level II standard). To maintain Level II in grade 5 reading, the student would need to earn a score of 1582 on the grade 5 reading test (based on the final recommended Level II standard) or higher. From grade 4 to grade 5, if the student’s score increased by 32 points ( $1582 - 1550 = 32$ ), then the student would have maintained Level II performance. Therefore, a student who was in Level II in grade 4 reading would need to increase his/her score by 32 points or more in grade 5 to have *Met* the progress target. Because the Level II performance standards are not the same across grades and content areas (i.e., they do not have the same numerical value), the *Met* progress target value will differ from grade to grade and across content areas.

The same concept applies to students who were in Level III: Advanced Academic Performance in the prior year. For these students the *Met* progress target is defined as the distance between the Level III standards in the prior year grade and content area and the current year grade and content area (see question 5 for more information about the use of the final recommended standards).

Because the goal is for all students to score at or above Level II, students who were in Level I: Unsatisfactory Academic Performance in the prior year have the same progress targets as students who were in Level II.

The *Exceeded* progress target is a designation reserved for those students who have demonstrated significant growth over the course of the year, beyond that of the *Met* progress range. The *Exceeded* progress target defines the upper limit of the *Met* range and is determined by calculating the

distance between the Level II standard in the prior year and the Level III standard in the current year. For example, the Level II standard in grade 4 reading is 1550 and the Level III standard in grade 5 reading is 1667. Progress greater than this 117-point increase ( $1667 - 1550 = 117$ ), which is significantly larger than the 32 point progress targets for *Met* (for Level II), would be classified as having *Exceeded* the progress target. Because the Level II and Level III standards are not the same across grades and content areas (i.e., they do not have the same numerical value), the *Exceeded* progress target value will differ from grade to grade as well as across content areas.



The diagram above illustrates the example discussed in this section (2013 grade 4 to 2014 grade 5 reading). The diagram shows the *Met* and *Exceeded* targets, represented by the arrows, as well as the progress classifications for the 2014 grade 5 reading student who had a scale score of 1550 on 2013 grade 4 reading. If the student has a gain score less than the *Met* target of 32, the student is classified as *Did Not Meet*. If the student has a gain score greater than or equal to the *Met* target of 32, and less than or equal to the *Exceeded* target of 117, then the student is classified as *Met*. If the student has a gain score greater than the *Exceeded* target of 117, the student is classified as *Exceeded*.

For more details regarding the progress classifications, including the progress targets for all grades and content areas, see the **Calculating Progress Measures** document at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar>.

#### **4. Are there any exceptions to the *Met* and *Exceeded* definitions described above?**

Yes. There are some places on the STAAR scale, specifically at the extreme high and low ends of the scale, where the application of the *Did Not Meet*, *Met*, and *Exceeded* definitions would not be appropriate. At the extreme ends of the scale, unlike the rest of the scale, answering one more question correctly results in large differences in scale scores. For this reason, several places on the scale have been identified as exceptions to the *Did Not Meet*, *Met*, and *Exceeded* definitions.

- All students scoring at the three highest raw scores in the current year will be classified as having *Exceeded* the progress target.
- Students who maintained Level III performance from the prior year to the current year will be classified as having *Met* or *Exceeded* the progress target. (The *Did Not Meet* classification will not be applied to these students.)
- Students scoring at or below chance in the current year will be classified as *Did Not Meet* progress.

Chance represents the score that could be reasonably obtained by guessing alone. For the reading and mathematics tests, chance is defined as  $\frac{1}{4}$ , or 25%, of the possible multiple-choice raw-score points since these questions have four answer options. Writing tests contain both multiple-choice questions and essays that are then weighted and combined to compute the total-test score. For these tests, chance is defined as  $\frac{1}{4}$ , or 25%, of the possible multiple-choice points, plus the weighted value associated with summed scores of 2 on the essays (representing a rubric score of 1 from both readers). The end-of-course (EOC) English tests include multiple-choice questions, essays, and short answer questions. Chance on these tests is defined as  $\frac{1}{4}$ , or 25%, of the possible multiple-choice raw-score points, plus the weighted value associated with summed scores of 2 on the essays, and scores of zero on the short answer questions.

All students, even those that meet the exceptions defined above, must meet several criteria in order to receive a progress measure. See question 16 for these criteria.

#### **5. Why are the final recommended standards, rather than the current phase-in standards, used to determine the progress targets?**

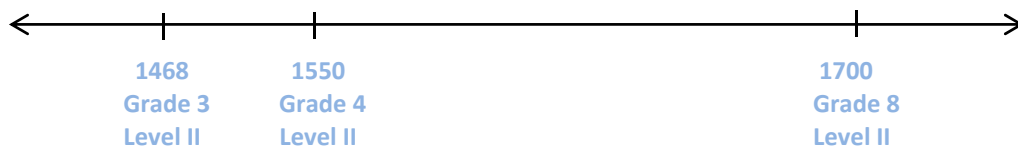
The final recommended standards are the values that resulted from meetings with hundreds of Texas educators. These values were recommended as representative of Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance and Level III: Advanced Academic Performance. During the process of making these recommendations, Texas educators considered empirical data related to STAAR and other tests, as well as the goal of preparing students for success beyond high school. While the phase-in standards change over time (e.g., when moving from phase-in 1 to phase-in 2), the final recommended standards remain constant and represent the standards to which students will be held to in the future. For these reasons, the final recommended standards, rather than the phase-in standards, are used to define the progress targets.

The decision to use the final recommended standards has minimal impact on the progress targets. Specifically, the Level III standards are not being phased in; therefore, the progress targets that use the Level III standards are the same. In addition, in the places where the progress targets would differ if the phase-in standards were used, the differences are relatively small. For example, based on the final recommended standards, the grade 5 reading *Met* progress target for students who were in Levels I or II in grade 4 is 32. In comparison, this value would be 36 if the phase-in 1 standards were used to define the progress target.

## 6. Why are some of the progress targets zero or negative?

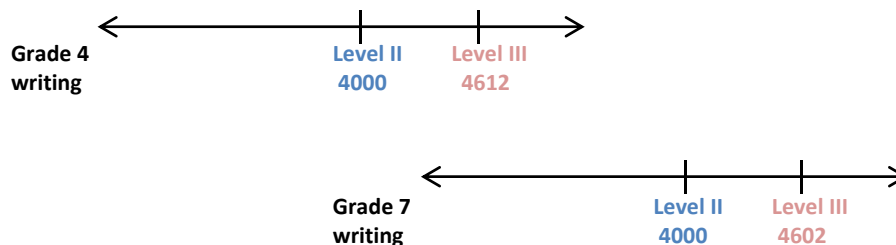
The progress targets are based on the final recommended standards (for both Level II and Level III) on successive tests. For grades 3–8 reading and mathematics, scores are reported on a vertical scale. This means that one continuous scale is used to report scores for all tests within the same content area for grades 3–8. The lower end of this scale includes the scores for the lower-grade tests (grades 3 and 4), while the higher end of the scale includes the scores for the higher-grade tests (grades 7 and 8). As an example, the final recommended Level II standard for grade 3 English reading is 1468, and the final recommended Level II standard for grade 4 English reading is 1550. Because of the vertical scale, the higher value in grade 4 reflects increased performance and knowledge expectations as compared to grade 3. The Level II standard for grade 8 reading is larger still, 1700, again reflecting increased performance and knowledge expectations within the same vertical scale.

Because scores on a vertical scale increase across grades, progress target values are positive. For example, the *Met* progress target for grade 4 English reading, for students who achieved Level II performance on grade 3 English reading, is 82 ( $1550 - 1468 = 82$ ).



In contrast, the STAAR writing as well as EOC assessments are on horizontal scales. This means that the same score values are used as the standards for tests within the same content area. For example, the final recommended Level II standard for both grade 4 writing and grade 7 writing is 4000.

For the tests that use horizontal scales, the progress targets may be zero or negative. Using the example above, the *Met* progress target for grade 7 writing for students who achieved Level II performance on grade 4 writing is 0 ( $3000 - 3000 = 0$ ). The *Met* progress target for grade 7 writing for students who achieved Level III performance on grade 4 writing is -10 because the grade 4 writing Level III standard is 4612 and the grade 7 writing Level III standard is 4602 ( $4602 - 4612 = -10$ ).



While it may seem odd to have progress targets that are zero or negative, these values are an expected product of a horizontal scale. Despite the small or negative values of some progress targets, they still represent increased performance from one year to the next because of the increased difficulty in content reflected on the tests.

### 7. Can a high-achieving student still demonstrate progress?

Yes. Students who consistently earn high scores, even those in Level III: Advanced Academic performance, have the opportunity to earn the *Met* and *Exceeded* progress classifications. Exceptions to the *Met* and *Exceeded* definitions have been developed specifically for high-performing students. These exceptions are as follows.

- All students scoring at the three highest raw scores in the current year will be classified as having *Exceeded* the progress target.
- Students who maintained Level III performance from the prior year to the current year will be classified as either having *Met* or *Exceeded* the progress target. (The *Did Not Meet* classification will not be applied to these students.)

### 8. How are progress measures different from performance levels?

Performance levels describe and classify students' performance in the current year. The STAAR performance levels are

- Level III: Advanced Academic Performance
- Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance
- Level I: Unsatisfactory Academic Performance

In contrast, progress measures provide information about the improvement or growth that students have achieved between the prior year and the current year within the same content area. Individual student growth is compared to progress targets so that progress can be classified as *Did Not Meet*, *Met*, or *Exceeded* the progress target.

### 9. Can a student have increased performance levels but not have *Met* progress?

Yes. A student can move to a higher performance level without having *Met* progress. Typically this occurs when a student earns the highest score in a performance level in the prior year and then earns the lowest score in the next performance level in the current year. In these cases, while the student crosses the threshold and achieved the higher performance level, the gain score (the

difference between the current year score and the prior year score) is not greater than or equal to the *Met* progress target.

#### **10. Does the STAAR progress measure change a student's passing status on STAAR?**

No. Passing status, which is determined by performance level, is independent from progress measures.

### **Applying the STAAR Progress Measures**

#### **11. Is progress measured the same way for all students in Texas?**

Progress is measured slightly differently for different assessments. In 2015, progress is only measured for students who take STAAR (including STAAR L and STAAR A). There is no progress measure in 2015 for students taking STAAR Alternate 2. Qualifying English language learners (ELLs) who test in English instead receive the separate ELL progress measure.

#### **12. How is progress measured for students who took STAAR Modified in 2014?**

Since there are no STAAR Modified assessments in 2015, students who took STAAR Modified assessments in a particular grade and subject in 2014 cannot receive a progress measure for the subsequent grade and subject assessment in 2015.

#### **13. Why is there no progress measure for students who take STAAR Alternate 2 in 2015?**

As required by legislation, a new Alternate assessment (STAAR Alternate 2) will be administered in 2014–2015. Therefore, the progress measure for the Alternate assessment will change to reflect the new assessment. Because of the legislative requirement to redesign STAAR Alternate, progress will not be reported on the new assessment until spring 2016 when two years of data on STAAR Alternate 2 are available.

#### **14. How is progress measured for ELLs?**

A separate ELL progress measure is used for qualifying ELLs who test in English. This measure takes into account students' years in U.S. schools and their Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) proficiency level in determining appropriate progress targets. For additional details about this measure, see the material on the **ELL Progress Measure** located at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar>.

ELLs who tested with Spanish language tests will receive the STAAR progress measure rather than the ELL progress measure.

## 15. How can I calculate my student's STAAR progress measure?

In order to calculate a student's progress measure, the following information is needed:

- Test information from the current year, including
  - Grade level
  - Content area
  - Test language (English or Spanish)
  - Scale score
  - Raw score
  - Performance level (Level I, Level II, or Level III) based on the performance standards in place in the current year (phase-in 1, phase-in 2, or final recommended)
- Test information from the prior year, including
  - Grade level
  - Content area
  - Test language (English or Spanish)
  - Scale score
  - Performance level (Level I, Level II, or Level III) based on the performance standards in place in the prior year (phase-in 1, phase-in 2, or final recommended)
- Gain score = Current-year scale score – Prior-year scale score

For step-by-step instructions for calculating STAAR progress using this information, see the **Calculating Progress Measures** document at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar>.

## 16. Why do some students not receive a progress measure?

While progress measures are available for most students, there are circumstances in which progress measures are not calculated. Students will not receive a progress measure in 2015 if they do not meet ALL of the following criteria within the same content area (mathematics, reading, writing, or English):

- Have a valid score from the prior year and the current year
- Have tested in successive grade levels or EOC tests in the prior year and the current year. Students who took the same grade-level or EOC test in the prior year and the current year will not receive a progress measure. Students who take STAAR assessments and have skipped a grade level between the prior year and the current year will receive a progress measure.
- Have taken a STAAR or STAAR L test in the prior year and a STAAR, STAAR L, or STAAR A test in the current year.
- For STAAR reading and writing assessments, have taken tests in the same language in the prior year and the current year (i.e., English or Spanish).

Note that students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) and that took Spanish language versions of the test must also meet the criteria above. LEP students that took English language



versions of the test and are eligible for the ELL progress measure will not receive a STAAR progress measure.

If a student does not meet one or more of these criteria, the student will not receive a progress measure. Some students may meet the criteria and receive a progress measure for one content area but not another.

### **17. Do students receive progress measures for retests?**

Progress measures are calculated for students who take the grades 5 and 8 reading and mathematics retests in May and June. Mathematics is not retested in 2015. For these students, progress measures are calculated using students' prior year scores and the retest scores for the current year. For EOC, progress is measured from the first administration of one test to the first administration of the next test (even if a student takes a test for the first time in the summer or fall). For example, progress would be calculated from the first time the student took English I to the first time the student took English II.

If a student retested in the previous year in grades 5 or 8 (e.g., current grade 6 student who retested in grade 5 or current Algebra I student who retested in grade 8 mathematics), the higher valid score between the primary administration and May administration is used for progress measure calculation. Previous year June administration retest scores for grades 5 and 8 are not used for progress measure calculations. Regardless of whether a student retested in the previous year for an EOC test, the first administration of the previous year test is used to calculate progress. Retest results are not used to compute progress measures for EOC.

### **18. Why does it appear as if more progress is required from grade 8 mathematics to Algebra I?**

The number of scale score points needed to have *Met* progress is defined in the same way for all grades and content areas and references the number of scale score points needed to move from the final recommended Level II standard at one grade to the final recommended Level II standard at the next grade (or in some cases Level III to Level III). This is true as we look at STAAR grade 8 mathematics to Algebra I as well. However, caution should be used when comparing student progress to phase-in standards across grades as the phase-in standards were not used in defining progress.

When differences in final recommended Level II standards across grades are the same as differences in phase-in 1 standards across grades, students can stay in phase-in 1 Level I AND be classified as having *Met* progress. However that is not necessarily the case for the STAAR grade 8 mathematics to STAAR Algebra I transition. In this case the difference between final recommended Level II standards (2300 scale score points) is greater than the difference between the phase-in 1 standards (1917 scale score points). The change from a vertical scale at grade 8 (final recommended Level II = 1700) to a horizontal scale at Algebra I (final recommended Level II = 4000) is largely responsible for these differences.

## **Reporting the STAAR Progress Measures**

### **19. When will STAAR progress measures be available?**

Progress measures (including the ELL progress measure) are provided on Confidential Student Reports (CSRs) for STAAR. This information will also be included in district accountability files and within the student and district data portals.

## **Interpreting the STAAR Progress Measures**

### **20. How is the STAAR progress measure useful to parents, teachers, and administrators?**

Scale scores and performance levels convey information about how a student performed in the current year. Progress measures provide additional information by communicating how much the student has improved from the prior year to the current year. When used together, this information provides a more complete picture of the student's achievement.

For example, while a student may have achieved the Level II standard and passed the test, the student may not have met the progress target. This information could help parents, teachers, and administrators identify students for early interventions to prevent them from falling behind in the future.

In contrast, a student may not have achieved the Level II standard, but the progress measure may indicate that the student made significant gains from the prior year to the current year. The progress measure allows parents, teachers, and administrators to recognize such gains. Additionally, because progress measures are included within accountability, campuses and districts can also receive credit within Index 2: Student Progress for these student improvements, even if the student has yet to achieve Level II performance and pass the test. (Refer to the "STAAR Progress Measures and Accountability" section for more information.)

### **21. If state, district, or campus pass rates haven't changed from one year to the next, does that mean that students did not make progress?**

STAAR performance levels and progress measures provide different information about student performance. Pass rates indicate the percent of students who achieved Level II or Level III performance on a test in a particular year. In comparison, progress measures indicate the amount of improvement or growth that students have made between the prior year and the current year. Students may make progress but remain in the same performance level. In this case, pass rates may not change even though students have made progress.

## **STAAR Progress Measures and Accountability**

### **22. When will STAAR progress measures be used for state accountability?**

STAAR progress measures were first included in accountability in 2013. In 2014, STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate and ELL progress measures were also included in state accountability. In 2015, STAAR progress measures and ELL progress measures are included in state accountability.

### **23. How are STAAR progress measures used for state accountability?**

Student progress on STAAR will be evaluated in Index 2: Student Progress in the accountability system. This index is designed to give districts and campuses one point credit for tests that *Met* the progress target and two point credit for tests that *Exceeded* the progress target. Detailed information about Index 2: Student Progress is available online in the *2015 Accountability Manual* at <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account>.

For information about how the ELL progress measure is used in state accountability, see [http://tea.texas.gov/Student\\_Testing\\_and\\_Accountability/Accountability/State\\_Accountability](http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Accountability/State_Accountability).

### **Development of STAAR Progress Measures**

### **24. Why did Texas develop and implement a measure of student progress?**

Progress measures are legislatively mandated for the STAAR program (Texas Education Code §39.023, §39.034, and §39.053). To meet these requirements, Texas developed the STAAR progress measure. In doing so, the goal was to provide additional information about student performance that is easy to understand and helpful to students, parents, and teachers.

The STAAR progress measure is also used within accountability, allowing campuses and districts to receive credit for students who have made progress even if they have yet to achieve Level II performance and pass the tests. In this way, the STAAR progress measure credits the hard work of teachers, campuses, and districts who have helped students improve from one year to the next.

### **25. What process was used to develop the STAAR progress measure?**

The development of the STAAR progress measure began before the tests were administered. A thorough investigation of progress measures was done to review the various approaches that could be used to measure student progress. As part of the development of the STAAR progress measure, many factors were considered, including the following:

- Different models for measuring student progress to determine the model best suited for STAAR
- Content relationships between STAAR tests to determine where progress measures are appropriate
- Federal and state requirements that determine how progress measures can be used for accountability
- Reporting options that allow information about progress to be communicated most effectively

Throughout the development of the STAAR progress measure, advice was sought from a number of advisory groups, including the Texas Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), a group of national psychometric experts. In addition, progress measures were discussed with the Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) and the Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC),

which are groups made up of educators from various Texas campuses and districts as well as parents, higher education representatives, and legislative representatives.

From this research and advice, the STAAR progress measure was developed and refined. The goal of providing additional information about student performance that was both meaningful and easy to understand was at the forefront of all development activities.

**26. How is the STAAR progress measure different from the Texas Projection Measure (TPM) that was used with TAKS?**

While the TPM used calculations to predict future progress, the STAAR progress measure classifies the progress that students have already achieved. Through statistical techniques, the TPM used student scores from several years to predict if the student was expected to pass the test in the future. The STAAR progress measure does not predict future performance. Rather, student scores from the prior year and the current year are compared to calculate the amount of improvement or growth the student has already made. This growth is then classified as *Did Not Meet*, *Met*, or *Exceeded*.

**27. Are there any updates to the progress measure for 2015?**

Yes. Changes to various aspects of the STAAR program affect TEA's ability to report student progress on the assessments. The list below outlines adjustments to the STAAR progress measures reported for the 2014–2015 school year:

- Students will not receive a STAAR progress measure for mathematics in grades 4–8 (Algebra I students will still receive a STAAR progress measure).
- A STAAR progress measure will be reported for the first time for grade 7 writing.
- A STAAR progress measure will be reported for eligible STAAR A students who took STAAR or STAAR L in 2013–2014.
- There is no longer a progress measure for STAAR Modified because the STAAR Modified assessment is no longer administered.
- Students will not receive a STAAR Alternate 2 progress measure.

See the STAAR Progress Measure Implementation Schedule for more information about the tests for which progress measures will be available in 2015 at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar>.